

FAMOUS DIAMONDS.

A TANGLED TALE SOMEWHAT STRAIGHTENED OUT.

The Real Gems of the World Distinguished According to Merit, and the Imaginary, Doubtful, and Fictitious Ones Daily Labeled.

PART II.

(Continued from June 22.)

THE MATAN.

The rejection of the Braganza would leave at the head of the list of the great diamonds of the world the Matan, which weighs 367 carats. It was found in Borneo in 1787, and has always belonged to the Sultan of Borneo. However, it is still in the rough and should not be compared with diamonds that are cut. It has a blue, metallic lustre, is about the size of a walnut, and is valued at two million dollars.

The Nizam diamond, which stands next, is at present in the possession of the Nizam of Hyderabad, the descendant of the Kings of Golconda. It weighs in the rough 340 carats and is valued at a million dollars. It was found in the Golconda mines. Had it not been broken by accident during the Indian mutiny it would weigh 400 carats.

THE GREAT NOGUL.

is the largest cut diamond in existence, but the trouble is we can't be sure it is in existence. It has never been seen or heard of since Tavernier reported that he saw it at Emperor Aurangzeb's palace in Delhi in 1665. It was put down as a Golconda stone, weighing after being cut 280 carats. This would make it the largest cut diamond in the world, but until it reveals itself again to human eyes it would be well to drop it from the list of actual diamonds. If the record be true the Great Mogul was reduced in cutting from 785 carats to 280.

THE GREAT TABLE.

is a diamond which Tavernier says he saw at Golconda in the hands of a merchant, to whom he offered 400,000 rupees for it. Its weight, being cut, is put down at 242 5/16 carats, which would make it second among cut diamonds. But unfortunately the Great Table, like the Great Mogul, has not been seen since Tavernier's time.

The Regent of Portugal. None of the records show clearly whether this diamond is cut or not. In the table which forms an appendix to Mr. Streeter's book it is put in the cut column, but that table is full of errors. However, as it is valued at about two million dollars, we may take it to be cut. It was found by a negro slave in Brazil in 1755, and is now supposed to be in the Portuguese treasury. It is put down as weighing at present 245 carats. It is tolerably certain that the Regent of Portugal is a diamond; in that respect it has the advantage of the Braganza, and it is also tolerably certain that it actually exists, in which respect it has the advantage of the Great Mogul and the Great Table, the two cut diamonds which weigh more.

THE ORLOFF.

now adorns the imperial sceptre of Russia. It weighs 195 carats. It was one of the eyes of an East Indian idol at Sefrangani, near Trichinopoly, when stolen by a French deserter, who sold it to a trader for \$10,000. The price paid to a diamond merchant at Amsterdam in 1750 by Prince Orloff, who used it to purchase the favor of Catherine II of Russia, was \$450,000 in cash and an annuity of \$20,000. It is about the size of a pigeon's egg. It is valued at two million dollars, and really in the list of cut diamonds the Orloff is the largest, of which it can be said that there is no doubt about its existence, its genuineness, or its whereabouts.

THE DARYA-I-NUR.

weighing 180 carats, must stand next to the Orloff in the list of the largest cut diamonds. Its name signifies the "Sea or River of Light," and it is the largest diamond belonging to the Shah of Persia. It is also said to have the finest lustre of any diamond in the world. Nadir Shah captured it when his Persian soldiers sacked the city of Delhi, the capital of the Mogul Empire, in 1739.

The Persian monarchs always made a specialty of collecting jewels. Writing about the return of the Persian Emperor Artaxerxes from his expedition against the Cedusians, 400 years B. C., Rollin in his ancient history says: "The King's behavior in this march was much admired. Neither the gold, with which he was covered, his purple robes, nor the jewels that glittered all over him and were worth six and thirty millions of livres, (about seven million dollars), prevented his having an equal share in the whole fatigue with the meanest soldier."

TAJ-E-MAH.

Although not next in size, the Taj-e-Mah (crown or crest of the moon) may be mentioned here. It is a twin jewel to the Darya-i-Nur, the two being set in a pair of magnificent bracelets belonging to the Shah of Persia. The Taj-e-Mah weighs 146 carats. The character of these two jewels and the use to which they are put are vouched for by a number of authorities, but chiefly by Sir John Malcolm, an Englishman, who, in the early part of the century, visited Persia in an official capacity, and, returning, wrote his experiences in an anonymous book of travel called "Sketches in Persia." These two jewels are the principal ones in a pair of bracelets valued at near five million dollars.

The Imperial, a South African stone, already mentioned, weighing after cutting 180 carats, must be catalogued next to the Darya-i-Nur.

THE TURKEY I AND II.

There are said to be two large diamonds in the Turkish regalia, of which hardly anything is known. They are put down as weighing respectively 147 and 84 carats. It seems quite likely, however, that if they ever did exist in the Sultan's Palace at Constantinople they are not there now, for when Abdul Aziz was deposed, about fifteen years ago, and Murad took his place, the latter paid his banker, a certain Christaki Effendi, the debt he owed him (about \$2,500,000) in diamonds, and these two may have been in the lot. But in that case they would probably have attracted special attention when Christaki put them on the market in Paris, and as nothing has yet been heard of them this is another case in which it will do no harm to wait for further evidence before believing that the diamonds ever existed. In 1881 an earnest effort was made to get some information on the subject at the Palace, but the effort was fruitless.

THE AUSTRIAN YELLOW.

This has at various times been called the Tuscan, the Florentine, the Great Florentine, and the Austrian, and, under misapprehension, the Maximilian. In Tavernier's time it belonged to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and ever since the Grand Duke of Tuscany Francis Stephen married Maria Theresa, the Empress of Austria, in 1745, it has been one of the crown jewels of Austria. It weighs 189 carats, and, though citron-colored, it is valued at half a million dollars. This is one of the diamonds that apocryphal stories have represented as having been worn and lost by Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, at the Battle of Morat, in 1476. But nearly all the romantic stories about Charles the Bold's diamonds can safely be rejected, as this one can be.

THE PITT OR REGENT.

is a diamond about which much has been written. It is now among the unused crown jewels of France in the Apollo Gallery, at the Louvre in Paris. Before it was cut it weighed 410 carats, more than either the Matan or the Nizam, but cutting reduced it to 137 carats. It was found in India by a slave in 1701. After it had passed through several hands Thomas Pitt, then Governor of Fort St. George, bought it from the chund, a diamond merchant, for \$100,000. The Governor, who was the grandfather of the great Earl of Chatham, and the great-grandfather of

William Pitt, brought it to Europe and sold it to the Regent Duke of Orleans during the minority of Louis XIV of France for three quarters of a million dollars. King, a distinguished diamond expert and author, has pronounced this stone, "for perfection of shape as well as for purity of water, the first diamond in the world." In 1791 it was valued at \$2,500,000. With this and eight other large diamonds the crown of France is the richest regal crown in the world.

There are several other cut diamonds that weigh almost as much as the Regent, but there is not space for the history of each.

The Stewart. This diamond, weighing in the rough 288 carats, may take its place here. It was one of the first great diamonds found in South Africa. The date of the find was in 1872. It is on the London market.

The Star of the South, found by a negro in Brazil in 1853, was purchased by the late ex-Governor of Baroda in India. In the rough it weighed 554, but cutting reduced it to 261 carats.

The Du Toit I, which is a little off color, and not of the first water, but free from flaws, was found in South Africa in 1878. In the rough it weighed 244 carats.

The Jagersfontein was found in South Africa in 1891, and weighs in the rough 204 carats.

THE KOH-I-NUR, or "Mound of Light," now belongs to the Crown of England. Its legendary history goes back five thousand years, but the first distinct and reliable reference to it occurs in the memoirs of Sultan Baber, the founder of the Mogul Empire. Writing in 1526 he describes how it came to him from Bikaner, Rajah of Gwalior, after the Battle of Panipat. It weighed then about 185 carats. Sultan Ala-ud-din had acquired it in 1304, when he defeated the Rajah of Malwa, in whose family it had been an heirloom from time out of mind.

This stone, as well as the Great Mogul, belonged to the Mogul Emperors when Tavernier visited Delhi in 1665, but while he mentions the Great Mogul he doesn't mention the Koh-i-Nur. Learned writers have argued that the Great Mogul and the Koh-i-Nur were identical, but Professor Ball and Mr. Streeter prove to the satisfaction of the ordinary reader that they were distinct. The Great Mogul may have been cleaved, mutilated, pulverized, and after that, after a further repolishing, temporarily forgotten, in the pocket of some cast-off garment belonging to some of the Moguls. It may come to light again, as other famous diamonds have done, after having been lost for ages, or it may never again be seen. Anyhow, it seems to be established that the Koh-i-Nur is not the Great Mogul.

In 1749 the Koh-i-Nur passed into the hands of Nadir Shah when he seized Delhi from Mohamud. From Nadir's family it passed to the Durani Afghans, and afterwards to the Lion of the Punjab, Ranjit Singh. The last owner of the gem previous to its consignment by the East India Company and its presentation to Queen Victoria in 1850 was the Maharajah Duleep Singh, sovereign of the Sikh nation. The English at one stroke despoiled him of his diamond and his kingdom. Last summer, May 21, 1889, the ex-Maharajah was married in Paris, France, to a young English woman, the daughter of Mr. B. D. Wetherill, of Hampshire, England. Some little time before that he sent a letter to the Queen of England, in which he said: "It will be useless for me to demand the restoration of my kingdom, swindled from me by your Christian government, but which I hope shortly, by the aid of Providence, to retake from my robbers. But my diamond, the Koh-i-Nur, I understand, is entirely at your own disposal. Therefore, believing Your Majesty to be the most religious body that your subjects pray for every Sunday, I do not hesitate to ask that this gem be restored to me, or else that a fair price be paid for it to me out of your privy purse." Queen Victoria has not yet replied. When the Koh-i-Nur was brought to England it weighed 181 1/16 carats, but it was irregular in shape, and Queen Victoria had it recut by Costar, of Amsterdam, transforming it into a perfect brilliant and reducing its weight to 106 carats, at a cost of \$4000. Although of a grayish tinge and not of the very finest water, it is valued at \$600,000.

In addition to the stones already mentioned there are about half a dozen others, which are said to weigh more than the Koh-i-Nur, and about fifty which weigh between 100 and 30 carats. But there is not room for a separate reference to each of these.

THE TAVERNIER BLUE.

The unique character of this stone entitles it to special mention. Tavernier brought it from India and sold it to Louis XIV. It was the French Revolution it was stolen, and when it reappeared long afterward it had assumed a different shape. When purchased from Tavernier the stone in the rough weighed 132 carats, but it was reduced to 67; before it was stolen. In 1830 a nameless stone, weighing only 44 carats, but with the delicate blue tint which had never been seen but in the Tavernier Blue, French, turned up in the hands of a London jeweler named Daniel Eliason, and was purchased by one Thomas Hy Hope. It has since been known as the Hope Blue, but it has been proved to a certainty that the Tavernier Blue after being stolen had been broken, and the Hope Blue is the larger part of it. It is valued at \$150,000, which is a very high price for a diamond of that size, because a diamond, even of the purest water, is not so rare as a stone worth more than \$10,000 to \$15,000 if it doesn't weigh over 30 carats.

THE GREAT SANCY.

cut, weighs 531 carats. It is another of the diamonds which imaginative writers like to trace back to Charles the Bold. But it is pretty certain that the bold Charles never saw it. M. de Harlay, Seigneur de Sancy, when French Minister at Constantinople in 1570, bought the stone there. He sold it to Queen Elizabeth of England, from whom it passed to Dowager Queen Henrietta Maria of Bourbon, who presented it to the Jacobite Earl of Worcester, who in turn presented it to James II, who was then an exile in France. James sold it to Louis XIV about 1695 for \$125,000, and when the French crown jewels were inventoried in 1791 the Great Sancy was valued at \$200,000. After the French Revolution Prince Demidoff of Russia bought it from a French merchant in 1805. Demidoff sold it to a London broker, who bought it for a Persian merchant, but in 1807 it was back in Paris, where it was put on exhibition by the jewelry firm of Bapst, who also had it in their showcase again at the great Paris Exposition last year.

The Little Sancy belongs to the royal treasury of Prussia. It is a brilliant weighing thirty-four carats, and worn as a pendant to a necklace. The diamond was bought from M. de Sancy (who was a diamond collector as well as a statesman and diplomat) by Prince Frederick Henry of Orange, the grandfather of King Frederick I of Prussia. Through King Frederick it passed from the Orange to the Prussian royal treasury.

THE NAPOLEON.

is so called because Napoleon bought it from Mr. Eliason, in London, for \$10,000, and wore it in the hilt of his sword on the day he married Josephine Beauharnais, in 1796. After that it disappeared, and has not been heard of since. It does not appear in the inventory of the French crown jewels made by order of the Emperor in 1810, and the late Empress Eugenie, who is familiar not only with the crown jewels of France, but with all the great jewels of the world, says she never saw it. One of the distinctions enjoyed by Mr. Streeter's book on "The Great Diamonds of the World" is that Mr. Streeter had for his collaborator the Empress of the French and the Queen of England.

Those who care to know about all the wars and murders and revolutions and diplomatic valuations and horrors that have been caused by these precious bits of mineral can't do better than read Mr. Streeter's book. The object of the present article is simply to give an accurate and reliable answer as circumstances may permit to the question, "What are the great diamonds of the world?"

If an inventory were taken it might be discovered that the diamonds of the world are used as highly as the gold stock of the world. Some people profess to believe that there are many things more beautiful than diamonds and more useful than gold. Shall we live to see the day when the one will be valued only for cutting glass and the other for filling teeth?

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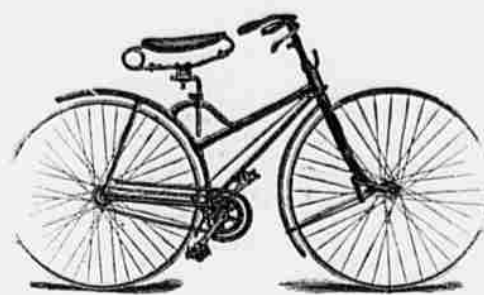
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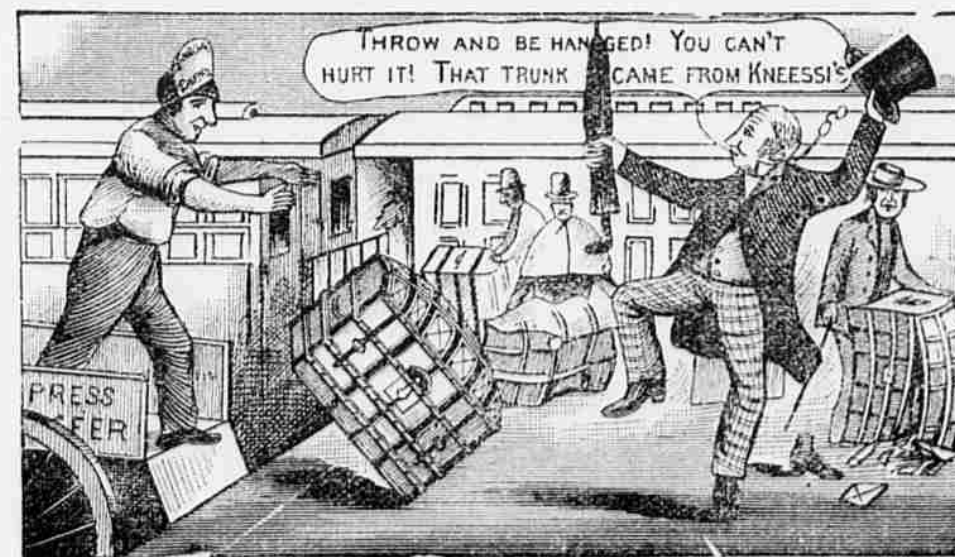
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